



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

**State Apprenticeship Expansion 2020 Grant
SAE2020 Grant RFA - 01
The Mississippi Department of Employment Security
Office of Apprenticeship
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, Mississippi 39213**

**Contact: Tonya Neely
Date of Release: July 1, 2021
Application Deadline: July 30, 2021**

Proposals shall be delivered in a sealed opaque envelope to the following address:

**Tonya Neely
Office of Apprenticeship
Mississippi Department of Employment Security
1235 Echelon Parkway
P.O. Box 1699
Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
SAE2020 Grant RFA - 01**

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TENTATIVE TIMELINE
SAE2020 Grant RFA - 01

July 1, 2021:	Release RFA – email and post to the MDES website
July 28, 2021:	Deadline for RFA Questions
July 30, 2021:	Application due by 5:00 p.m. Central Time (CT) to Office of Apprenticeship
August 10, 2021:	Evaluation of applications completed
August 12, 2021:	Notice of intent to Award
August 31, 2021:	Contract due to MDES
September 1, 2021-June 30, 2023:	Period of Performance

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION – The Mississippi Department of Employment Security Mississippi Apprenticeship Program

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) through the Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP) is soliciting noncompetitive sealed applications from qualified applicants for the State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant (SAE2020).

Background Info:

Registered Apprenticeship is a proven strategy for helping businesses grow their own skilled workforce through a combination of customized and rigorous on-the-job training and related classroom instruction. MAP helps companies, regardless of size, develop a Registered Apprenticeship (RA) program from the initial concept phase to registration and subsequent implementation within the company. Recognizing that RA is business driven, MAP works closely with companies to identify the occupations and skillsets needed on their job site and build out a RA program designed to meet their needs. MAP works with institutions of higher education and industry partners across the state to strengthen the workforce and provide more opportunities for Mississippians to participate in apprenticeship programs. These programs represent a variety of fields such as manufacturing, transportation, logistics, energy and utilities, banking and finance, and more, that enable our state's residents to earn a living wage while learning a new skill that could lead to a meaningful career.

MAP was launched in 2016 to expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and transform workforce development in Mississippi (MS). Developed through unprecedented collaboration between the **MS Department of Employment Security (MDES)** and the **MS Development Authority (MDA)**, in less than four years MAP has positioned RAPs as a viable workforce development tool that aligns our workforce and educational systems, strengthens economic competitiveness for our businesses, and makes good-paying jobs more accessible for our citizens. As a result of MAP's efforts, RAPs have been endorsed by state workforce leaders and written into Mississippi's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA Plan) Combined State Plan. Thus, RAPs have been aligned with state goals embodied in our WIOA Plan. This will help to prepare and employ skilled workers for in-demand occupations. It will also contribute to the workforce development, credit and credential attainment goals and help MS residents fill middle-skill jobs.

Under the 2019 State Apprenticeship Expansion effort, MAP has continued functioning as a collaborative effort between MDES, MDA, and the Department of Labor's Mississippi Office of Apprenticeship (OA) as the primary partners that will co-chair the **MAP Advisory Council**. The MAP Advisory Council is the planning group consisting of government, workforce, education and other public/private partners that work together to help expand RAPs in MS. MDES will continue functioning as the grant lead applicant and fiscal agent in addition to implementing daily statewide MAP activities.

Purpose

A critical factor in attracting and retaining companies is the state's workforce. MS business and industry compete for a limited number of highly skilled workers. RA offers a crucial and effective response to this challenge by helping companies "grow their own" pipeline of skilled workers who are prepared to help their companies thrive.

MAP is a bold new initiative to expand RA programs and transform workforce development in this state. Developed through the unprecedented collaboration between MDES and MDA, MAP is positioning RA as a viable pathway that aligns across our workforce and educational systems. It strengthens economic competitiveness for our businesses and makes good-paying jobs more accessible for our citizens.

Expectations

The Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (MAP) will implement the following two Tier II Goals and performance objectives.

Goal 1: Category A- General Business Outreach, Technology and/or Technical Assistance (TA)
<i>i. Establish an employer incentive plan to expand or scale RAPs.</i>
Objective 1.1: To increase the number of new apprentices by a minimum of 10% (N=153) above the September 30, 2019 baseline of 1,529 total apprentices by June 30, 2023.
Objective 1.2: To conduct a minimum of 600 new business recruitment contacts (virtual and/or live) by June 30, 2023.
Objective 1.3: To at least double the number of new RAP Sponsors (N=10) above the September 30, 2019 baseline (N=5) by June 30, 2023.
Objective 1.4: To at least double the number of new Registered Programs (N=18) above the September 30, 2019 baseline (N=9) by June 30, 2023.
Objective 1.5: To register at least a minimum of 75% of RAP employers on the WIOA <i>Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)</i> by June 30, 2023.
Objective 1.6: To conduct at least 6 RAP training/technical assistance meetings (virtual and/or live) by June 30, 2023.

Goal 2: Category B- Apprenticeship Diversification/New Industry Goals
<i>ii. Launch or expand sector strategy(ies) to expand RAPs to new industries and/or new or non-traditional occupations within existing sectors.</i>
Objective 2.1: To expand or launch RAPs in at least 3 new sectors by June 30, 2023.
Objective 2.2: To enroll at least 15% of newly recruited apprentices into nontraditional industries and/or occupations by June 30, 2023.
Objective 2.3: To develop a minimum of 9 new print, electronic, and/or social media MAP recruitment messages targeting women, minorities, veterans, and other underserved populations by June 30, 2023.

A. Outcome Goals

Our plan to increase RAPs in MS includes three strategies: 1) Develop new RAP sponsors (penetrating new industry sectors and engaging businesses, institutions of higher education and public/private intermediaries as sponsors); 2) Expand state capacity to support RAPs and engage new sponsors, partners, and participants (through coordination of key functions across state agencies, technical assistance, and the addition of new staff and infrastructure); and 3) Target and expand the participation and completion of diverse populations in RAP programs –with an emphasis on dislocated workers, women, communities of color, youth, veterans, and people with disabilities through a formal outreach and promotions campaign.

MAP seeks to increase interest among new apprentices and employers by increasing our information dissemination and outreach efforts using both traditional and social media tools and platforms. MAP will expand the number of apprentices in the workforce by recruiting and enrolling a minimum of 153 new apprentices by the end of the three-year project period. This represents the mandatory 10% increase over our September 30, 2019, baseline of 1,529 enrolled apprentices (see Table 2).

To effectively reach both new businesses and apprentices, MAP will conduct another competitive bid process to select a professional marketing firm to continue the development of creative and engaging recruitment messages and materials. In 2018, MAP selected a local marketing firm, Fahrenheit Creative Group, LLC, to develop our new program logo, various marketing and presentation materials, and our new program website- www.msapprenticeship.works. As a result of this partnership, MAP was able to brand our RAP efforts, which gave our program an identity and assisted with statewide recruitment activities.

B. Outcome Goals

MAP proposes recruiting a minimum of 200 new businesses per year for a total of at least 600 new businesses engaged by the end of the three-year project period. Based on our prior experience, the proposed 600 contacts will really necessitate numerous follow-up contacts to result in successful employer recruitments. MAP will work closely with the State Workforce Development Board (SWIB) and Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) utilizing a sector-based approach to recruiting new employer and industry partners.

MAP proposes registering a minimum of nine (9) of new companies as RAPs by the end of the three-year project period. MAP will continue subcontracting with MS institutions of higher education and other public/private intermediaries to serve as RAP Sponsors to increase the number of employers and apprentices. Specifically, MAP proposes at least doubling the number of new RAP Sponsors from five (5) to ten (10) by the end of the project period. Our current RAP Sponsors include: Hinds Community College, Pearl River Community College, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, Coahoma Community College, and MS Gulf Coast Community College. With our current State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE 2016) Grant set to expire in September 2021, MAP proposes conducting another competitive Request for Applications (RFA) process to identify new sub-grant partners including both public and private intermediary organizations. For example, some states have partnered with workforce intermediaries such as Jobs for the Future, Chicago Women in Trades, and the National Urban League to assist with RAP expansion. MAP will reach out to these entities as well as other MS public/private workforce and industry organizations as potential intermediary partners to assist with RAP implementation to lessen administrative burdens. MAP will also utilize the technical assistance provided through Apprenticeship.gov and Workforce GPS to assist with outreach to various intermediaries.

We will continue working closely with the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) to engage a wide array of business and industry partners and MDA as it recruits new business and industry from around the world into MS. Ongoing investments in outreach activities targeting both sponsors and potential apprentices will drive expansion efforts. For example, targeted messaging and outreach to high school students and parents as well as employers, local chambers of commerce, and industry groups will help to build pipelines into RAPs, especially for secondary students with Career and Technical Education (CTE) interests.

Ongoing investments in outreach activities targeting both sponsors and potential apprentices will drive expansion efforts. For example, targeted messaging and outreach to high school students and parents, employers, local chambers of commerce and industry groups will help to build pipelines into RAPs, especially for secondary students with CTE interests.

A. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Questions concerning the RFA should be sent to: apprenticesinfo@mdes.ms.gov

The deadline for submitting written questions by email is July 28, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT) (Refer to the Tentative Timeline Checklist for the appropriate date) Copies of all questions submitted and the responses will be posted to MDES's website ([Mississippi Apprenticeship Program](https://www.mdes.ms.gov) (MDES - Mississippi Apprenticeship Program (ms.gov))) under the Public Notices section and will be available to the general public on August 2, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

B. DUE DATES FOR APPLICATIONS

Submit one (1) original and (3) copies of the applications. The sealed application packet must be received by 5:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT) on July 30, 2021, at the following address based upon the delivery method used:

**Ship Applications to:
(FedEx UPS, etc.)**

Tonya Neely
Office of Apprenticeship
The Mississippi Department of Employment Security
(State Apprenticeship Expansion 2020 Grant)
1235 Echelon Parkway
Jackson, MS 39213
(DO NOT OPEN)

PLEASE NOTE:

In person deliveries of applications will not be accepted or considered for an award.

C. RESPONSIVENESS AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE APPLICANT

- Ensure that application is received in the Office of Apprenticeship by the deadline and applicant assumes all risks of delivery.
- At the time of receipt of the application, the application will be date stamped and recorded in the Office of Apprenticeship.
- Applications and modifications received after the time designated in the RFA will be considered **late** and will not be considered for award.
- Incomplete applications will not be evaluated and will not be returned for revisions.
- No faxed submissions will be accepted.
- Applications that do not include the required number of copies will not be evaluated.

- The application must be signed and all documents placed in a sealed envelope.
- We strongly recommend that you plan to submit the application early in order to allow for unforeseen circumstances.
- Read, complete and sign ALL applicable documents.
- Submit all written questions to apprenticesinfo@mdes.ms.gov and check for answers on the MDES webpage ([MDES - Mississippi Apprenticeship Program \(ms.gov\)](http://mdes.ms.gov)) in reference to the SAE2020 Grant RFA - 01.

D. SCOPE OF WORK AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- See attached Addendum (Proposal Narrative)

E. MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

The specific responsibilities of MDES are as stated below:

- Provide a contact person for the sponsor/sub-grantee
- Review, approve and process invoices for reimbursement
- Provide pertinent RA information to assist the sub-grantee
- Provide Technical Assistance (Forums, Intermediary Meetings, Discussions, etc.)
- Promote RA partner programs through Cartographer newsletter, Latitudes blog posts, and social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter)

F. FORMAT AND PROCEDURE FOR DELIVERY OF APPLICATION

The application will consist of six parts: Part I – Cover Page; Part II – Proposal Narrative; Part III –Budget; Part IV – Acceptance of Conditions; Part V-Signed MDES Application, Question & Answer Document, Leadership Commitment, Part VI-Appendices. Please see the attached **Application Requirements Attachment and Tentative Deadline Attachment** for submission.

- **Part I is the Cover Page** - ([MDES - Mississippi Apprenticeship Program \(ms.gov\)](http://mdes.ms.gov)), The applicant must complete the application in response to the RFA. (See **Appendix C** for Cover Page template). Please include the signed **cover page** as the second page of your application, (Attachment A) which shall serve as the signature. The cover pages does not count toward the 10-page limit for proposal narratives or the 10-page limit for attachments.
- **Part II is a Proposal Narrative** - The proposal narrative must be included as an attachment to the application. The application must be a minimum of 10 pages. Please see the attached **Application Requirement Attachment** for submission.

- **Part III is the Budget** - College/University must submit a detailed budget and cost justification capturing all sources of funding that will be used to support the MAP initiative at their college/university over the period of the grant award.

College/University must submit a detailed budget and cost justification capturing all sources of funding that will be used to support the MAP initiative at their college/university over the 2-year period.

Applicants may apply for up to \$150,000 for the period of July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2023.

Note: College/University may request up to two (2) budget modifications during the project period only when necessary.

The budget and cost justification do not count against the 10-page narrative limit or the 10-page attachment limit.

College/University are strongly encouraged to braid funding from multiple sources to support their implementation of MAP and the companies and participants who can benefit from it.

College/University must demonstrate how they plan to leverage additional federal (e.g. WIOA ABE and training funds, Ability to Benefit, etc.), state (e.g. FTE reimbursement, Basic Skills, etc.), local (e.g. MIBEST, other foundation grants, donations from business partners, etc.), and/or other funds to support MAP. Identify the specific funding source(s) and amounts for all leveraged funds.

Indirect Costs: Indirect costs are allowed at no more than \$3,750 (5%).

- **Part IV is the Acceptance of Conditions** – The applicant must sign the Standard Terms and Conditions as set forth beginning on page number [10] of the RFA. If the applicant objects to any of the terms and conditions, the applicant shall so state and shall indicate any revisions desired by the applicant. Please note that any revisions may be considered adequate cause for rejection of the application.

G. ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS

MDES reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to waive minor irregularities in applications. A minor irregularity is a variation of the RFA, which does not affect the application, or give one party an advantage or benefit not enjoyed by other parties, or adversely impacts the interest of the Department. Waivers, when granted, shall in no way modify the RFA requirements or excuse the party from full compliance with the RFA specifications and other contract requirements if the party is awarded the contract.

H. STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS – Do NOT alter clauses

Certain terms and conditions are required for contracting. Therefore, the applicant shall assure agreement and compliance with the following standard terms and conditions.

1. ACCESS TO RECORDS

Sub-grantee agrees that MDES, or any of its duly authorized representatives, at any time during the term of this agreement, shall have access to, and the right to audit and examine any pertinent books, documents, papers, and records of Sub-grantee related to Sub-grantee's charges and performance under this agreement. Such records shall be kept by Sub-grantee for a period of three (3) years after final payment under this agreement, unless MDES authorizes their earlier disposition. Sub-grantee agrees to refund to MDES any overpayment disclosed by any such audit. However, if any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of 3-year period, the records shall be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it.

2. APPLICABLE LAW

The contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Mississippi, excluding its conflicts of laws provisions, and any litigation with respect thereto shall be brought in the courts of the State. Sub-grantee shall comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

3. APPROVAL

It is understood that if this contract requires approval by the Public Procurement Review Board and/or the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration Office of Personal Service Contract Review and this contract is not approved by the PPRB and/or OPSCR, it is void and no payment shall be made hereunder.

4. AUTHORITY TO CONTRACT

Sub-grantee warrants: (a) that it is a validly organized business with valid authority to enter into this agreement; (b) that it is qualified to do business and in good standing in the State of Mississippi; (c) that entry into and performance under this agreement is not restricted or prohibited by any loan, security, financing, contractual, or other agreement of any kind; and, (d) notwithstanding any other provision of this agreement to the contrary, that there are no existing legal proceedings or prospective legal proceedings, either voluntary or otherwise, which may adversely affect its ability to perform its obligations under this agreement.

5. AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

It is expressly understood and agreed that the obligation of MDES to proceed under this agreement is conditioned upon the appropriation of funds by the Mississippi State Legislature and the receipt of state and/or federal funds. If the funds anticipated for the continuing fulfillment of the agreement are, at any time, not forthcoming or insufficient, either through the failure of the federal government to provide funds or of the State of Mississippi to appropriate funds or the discontinuance or material alteration of the program under which funds were provided or if funds are not otherwise available to MDES, MDES shall have the right upon ten (10) working days written notice to Sub-grantee, to terminate this agreement without damage, penalty, cost or expenses to MDES of any kind whatsoever. The effective date of termination shall be as specified in the notice of termination.

6. COMPLIANCE LAWS

Sub-grantee understands that MDES is an equal opportunity employer and therefore, maintains a policy which prohibits unlawful discrimination based on race, color, creed, sex, age, national origin, physical disability, disability, genetic information, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state, or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful and Sub-grantee agrees during the term of the agreement that Sub-grantee will strictly adhere to this policy in its employment practices and provision of Security. Sub-grantee shall comply with, and all activities under this agreement shall be subject to, all applicable federal, State of Mississippi, and local laws and regulations, as now existing and as may be amended or modified.

7. DEBARMENT AND SUSPENSION

Sub-grantee certifies to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it:

(1) is not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from covered transaction by any federal department or agency or any political subdivision or agency of the State of Mississippi;

(2) has not, within a three year period preceding this agreement, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction;

(3) has not, within a three year period preceding this agreement, been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against it for a violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(4) is not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any of these offenses enumerated in paragraphs two (2) and (3) of this certification; and,

(5) has not, within a three year period preceding this agreement, had one or more public transactions (federal, state, or local) terminated for cause or default.

8. DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Sub-grantee shall agree to assure the confidentiality of any records obtained from MDES as required by state and federal privacy laws. No information, documents or other material provided to or prepared by Sub-grantee deemed confidential by MDES pursuant to state and federal privacy laws, shall be made available to any person or organization without the prior approval of MDES. Any liability resulting from the wrongful disclosure of confidential information on the part of Sub-grantee shall rest with Sub-grantee.

9. PERFORMANCE OF CONTRACT BY SUB-GRANTEE

Sub-grantee hereby agrees to perform the Specified Security herein described in Paragraph 1 above in a proper, workmanlike, and dignified manner; warrants that he/she is able to and will perform such Specified Security in a manner acceptable to MDES; and agrees to make all additions, deletions and/or changes that may be required by MDES, as a condition precedent to the acceptance of such Specified Security by MDES.